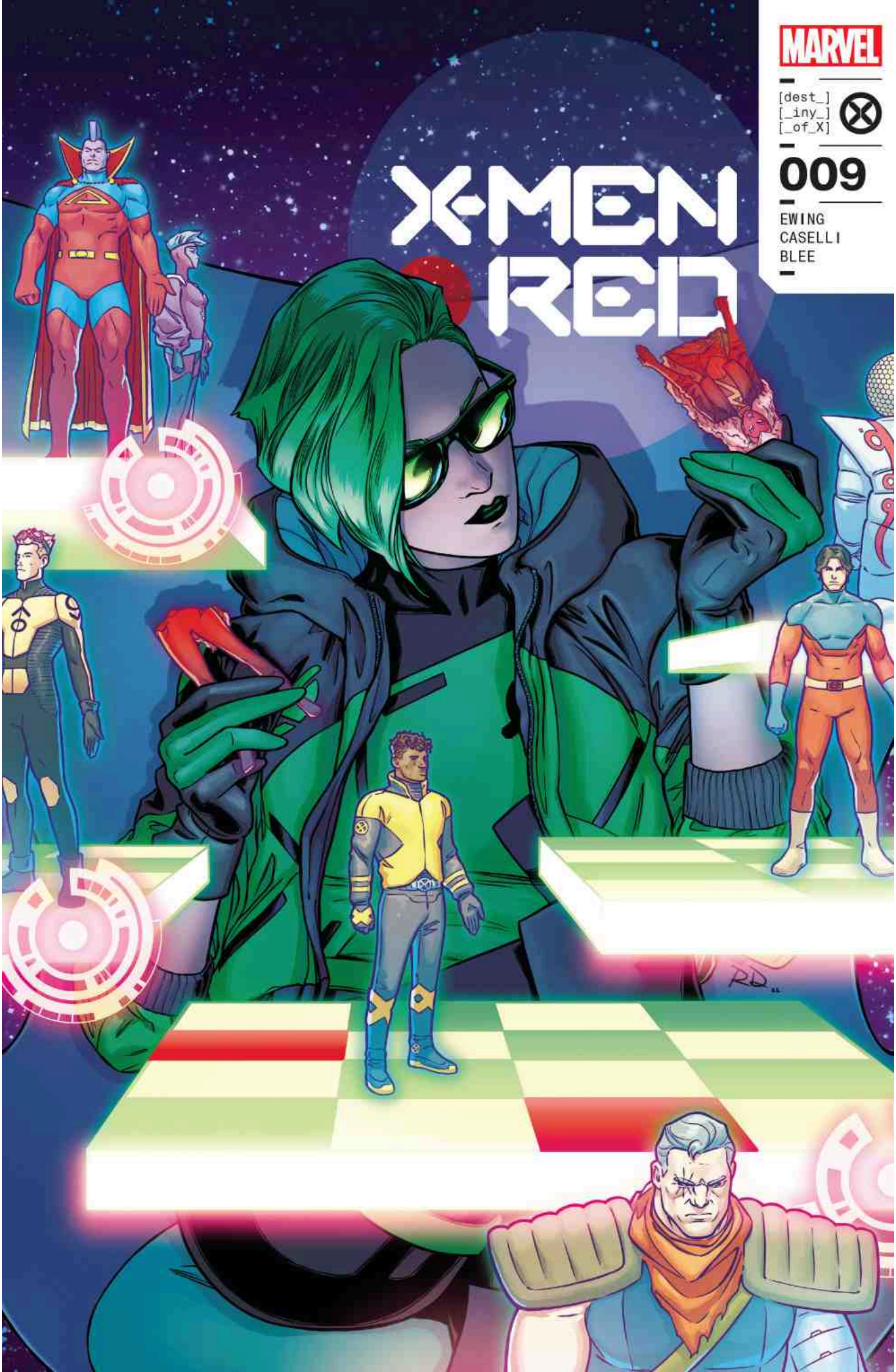
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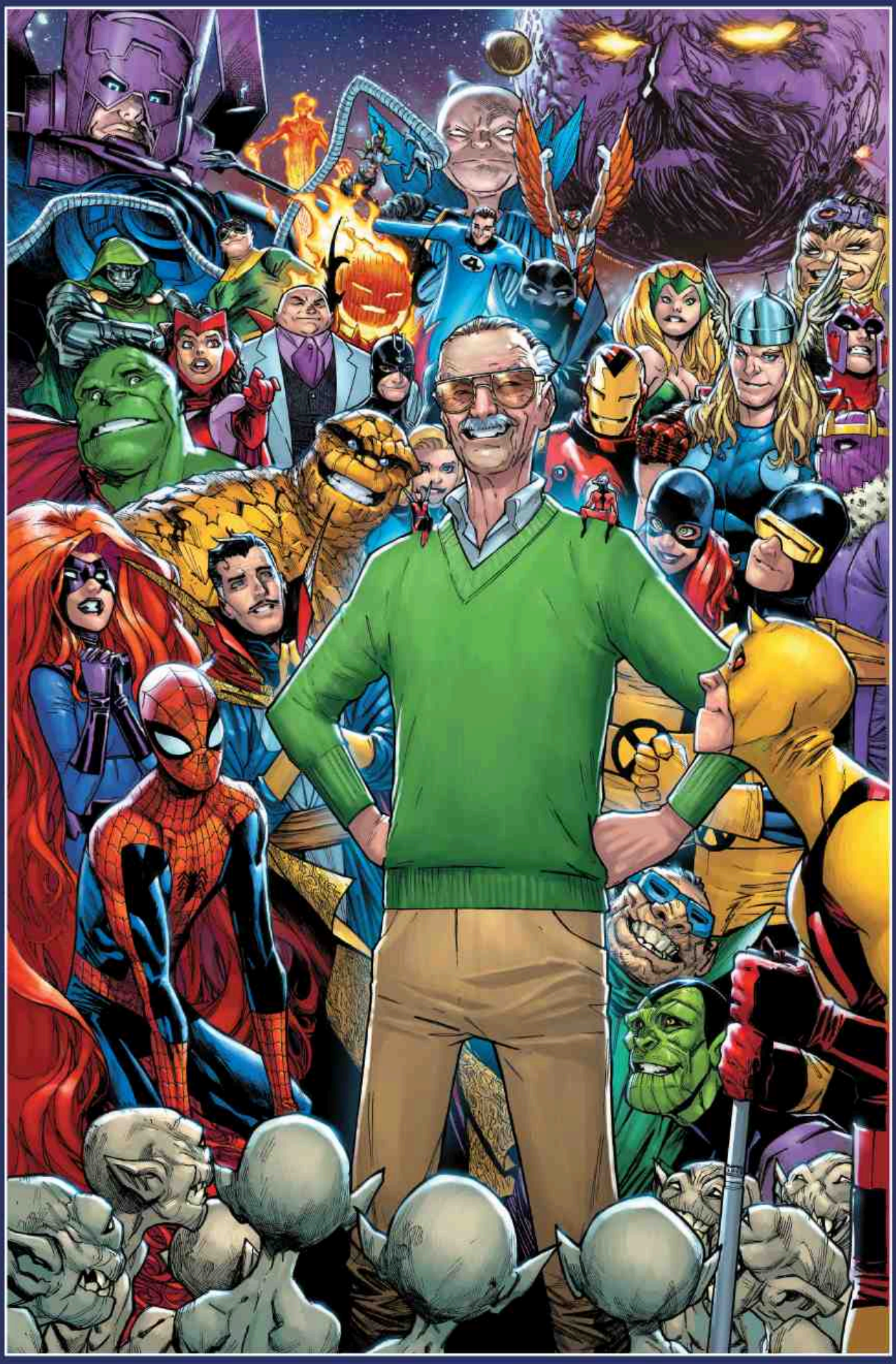
100 YEARS AND STILL INSPIRING US ALL



WE LOVE YOU, STAN!

THE QUIET COUNCIL OF KRAKOA

//FURTHER NOTES RE: VULCAN/GABRIEL SUMMERS//
//FOR DISTRIBUTION TO ALL COUNCIL MEMBERS//

Commander Brand of S.W.O.R.D. has approached me with what I consider to be an important concern: that with the sad loss of Erik Lehnsherr -- not merely one of my oldest and most valued friends, but also a verified Omega-level mutant -- Krakoa (and Arakko) find themselves dangerously underpowered at a critical moment in our history.

While I vehemently disagree with Erik's choices, I have no wish to deny him agency by attempting resurrection via non-standard means. However, the plain fact is that in these difficult times, Krakoa cannot remain an Omega short.

And so we come, again, to the matter of Gabriel Summers.

Following his death in ritual combat in Arakko's "Circle Perilous," after increasing displays of unstable behavior, it was judged best -- after consultation with his immediate family -- that Vulcan be moved to a place of tertiary importance in the resurrection queue until further notice, to give us all time to work out how to address his ongoing problems. However, with Magneto gone, I believe Commander Brand is right -- the time has come to bring Gabriel back to us. And though the issue of his mental state remains, I believe I have a working solution.

Telepathic surgery is a complex matter to begin with, and I would never alter a mutant's mind or memories -- that would be the ultimate mental violation. I simply will not do it under any circumstances. (Barring cases of absolute necessity, of course.)

That said, I see no ethical difficulty in *adding* information to a mind. We already offer telepathic downloads of the Krakoan alphabet to all mutants, and Harry Leland gratefully accepted an infusion of the geopolitical history he had missed out on before he accepted a place representing Krakoa in the U.N.

This would be a similar matter, but delivered while Vulcan's mind is being reseated in the new body -- a lightning-fast course of telepathic behavioral therapy to put Gabriel at ease on waking and give him the tools he needs to control his rage and paranoia moving forward.

Admittedly, I am not technically trained as a psychologist, nor has this been attempted before. But I have become something of an old hand at telepathic surgery in the last year -- and this will not be the first troubled mutant mind I have brought a measure of calm to during my time as an educator.

I have total confidence that I will succeed.

--Xavier

For the record, Scott?
I don't like this at all.
ARBOR MAGNA. THEN.
I hear you, Alex. But strategically, it makes perfect sense.
If Erik's chosen to stay dead, we need powerhouses. And this time, I think Charles' idea is helpful.
I know I'd have preferred an information download in the egg. Hit the ground running...
Well, Jean could do that for you.
Actually...it's usually Emma who brings me back.
Nope. Not dissecting that one.
The point is-- this isn't just a download, Scott. This is a repair job. And maybe you trust Emma to play with your head...
...but do you trust Charles?
...
I make a point of not spying on anyone's private thoughts, Alex.
I do, however, have ears.

Sorry, Professor. Guess I'm just hoping this doesn't go sideways.
Like last time.
This is weird. He's not hatching.
Eva-- let's do a quick age-up on the shell--
Nothing. It's his first time out of an egg, right?
Anyone else think this might be a Kate Pryde situation?
Right--when she instinctively tried to phase instead of hatch.
She needed a psychic jump start, something to get her moving...
Indeed. And I saw how Emma did it.
A little additional guidance, that's all.
Let Gabriel know that life is here... only waiting for...
...him...
FWOOSH
AAAAHHH!

Professor!
What did you do...?
I--I didn't do anything. I didn't put his mind back.
He...he saw I was holding it...
...and he took it from me.
NOW...
Gabe? Is that you in there?
Are you okay...?
Yes. Yes, I am.
The shell is broken, brother.
NOW.

It's happening now.

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X-MEN RED

IT'S HAPPENING NOW

Magneto is dead and the Great Ring is only beginning to recover. The resultant power vacuum and escalating tensions between the Shi'ar and Mutants have left intergalactic politics unstable -- something Abigail Brand is only too happy to take advantage of. Starting with throwing an unhinged Vulcan right into the thick of things to either set off an intergalactic powderkeg or raze it all to the ground.

Meanwhile, Abigail's agents of S.W.O.R.D., led by Cable, have begun uncovering her true intentions and are horrified by the depths of her manipulations. They must report back and warn Arakko before she can fully set her plans in motion -- if only they can survive long enough to send a warning.

[CABLE]

[ABIGAIL BRAND]

[THUNDERBIRD]

[MANIFOLD]

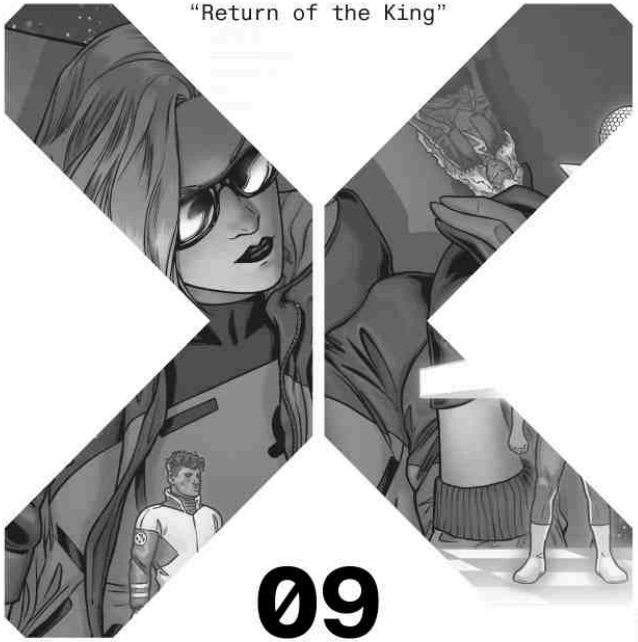
[KHORA OF THE BURNING HEART]

[WIZ-KID]

[WEAPONLESS ZSEN]

[VULCAN]

"Return of the King"



09

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X-MEN created by **Stan Lee & Jack Kirby**

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THE DIPLOMATIC ZONE. NOW.
Cal'syee. I heard the good news--our marriage was blessed, as they say.
How's my son?
Our child... is somewhere safe.
Safe from the intrigues of the Shi'ar. Safe from scientists and their endless experiments.
Safe from us, Gabriel.
Ouch.
Though it seems you've no problem with other children being part of the intrigue. Better to throw your niece to the wolves, is that it?
That's "your royal niece," Mr. Summers...
Shush.
Oh, "Mr. Summers" was my father.
I...am Emperor Vulcan.

Emperor no more. The days of your accursed rule are stricken from official memory--
Is that so? Well, I can understand the desire to pretend. I'm a little embarrassed by those days myself--not my best work.
I'll do so much better on my second reign...
Unbelievable.
Can someone X-affiliated tell me who was dumb enough to resurrect this creep?
The mad king? During a period of Shi'ar political unrest? Are you trying to start a war here?
He came out of the Fault alive, Nova.
What were we supposed to do, throw him back?
He started a galactic war for kicks, Joanna. He dropped nega-bombs on inhabited worlds to see the fireworks.
You don't throw that guy back into Hell.
You fire him out of a krutaking cannon.

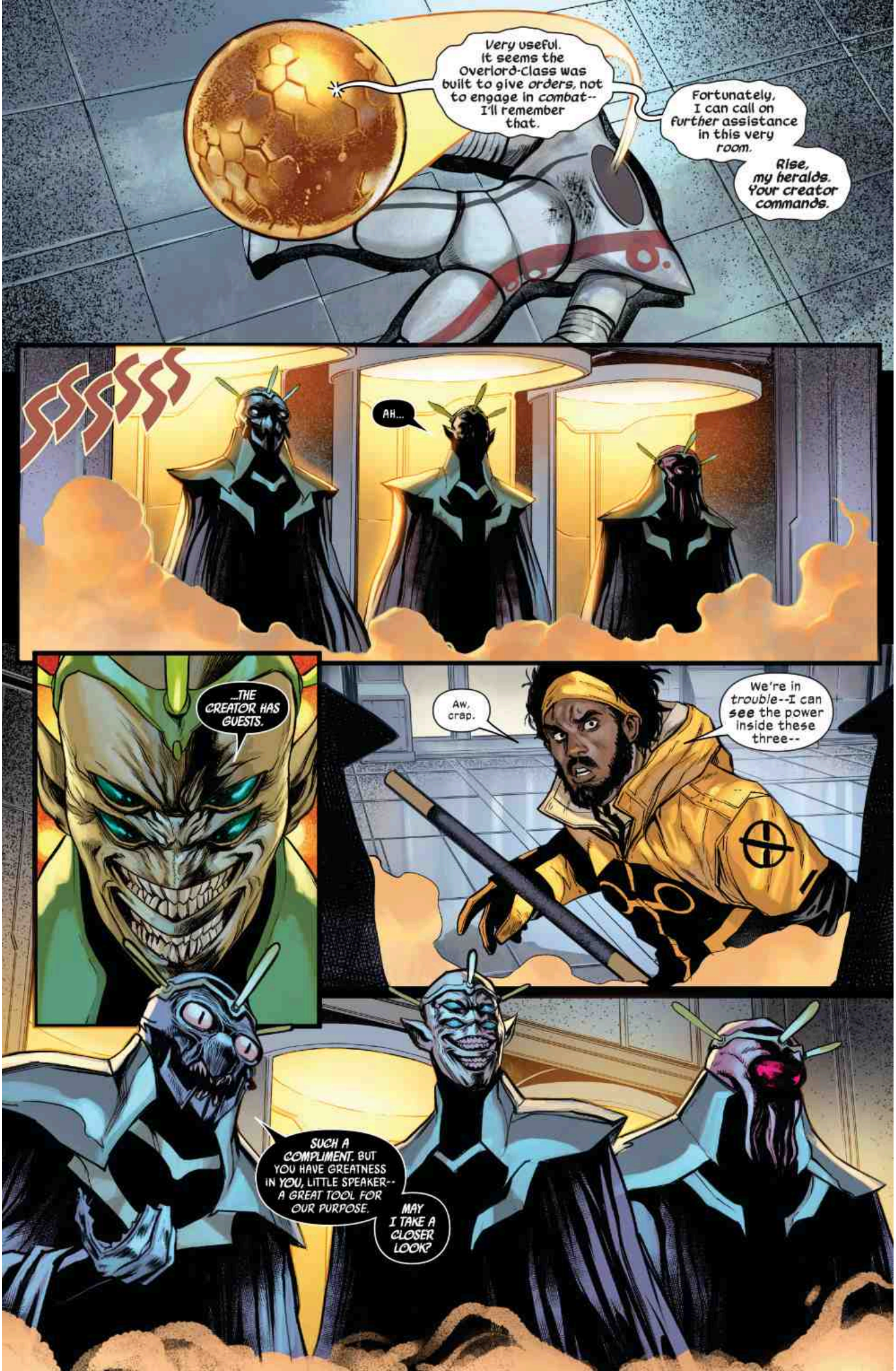
Very evocative.
Shut it, War Crimes.
Gladiator-- you knew about this? You, of all people, know what could happen--
I serve the Shi'ar throne, Nova. And Charles Xavier himself--the Empress' father--pronounced Vulcan safe.
In the face of that, we chose to respect old alliances...
...to choose... to choose mercy...
What...?
What's happening...?
Kallark?
Gladiator!
Fun fact: Strontians are powered by their own confidence. They have an enlarged prefrontal cortex, just buzzing with electrical impulses.
As an Omega-level energy manipulator, I can reroute those impulses.
That's what I think of mercy.
"What could happen"? Oh, Nova. You stupid policeman.
It's happening now.

Vulcan--
Gabriel Summers.
You are hereby charged with crimes against sentient life under the Pan-Worlds Treaty.
Surrender now, or--
Or "face immediate penalty" from the galaxy's last good cowboy? Please.
What are you going to do, "Nova Prime"? Use the Nova Force?
This Nova Force?
AARRRGH--!
This is Frenzy calling Brand! Emergency alert!
We need S.W.O.R.D. security to the Shi'ar Embassy!
Brand, pick up--
KRAK

S.W.O.R.D. STATION TWO. THE KEEP.
Brand!
Pick up the damn comms!
She'd be pissed if she knew you were already watching...
She's pissed at me anyway. It's only her sense of duty that keeps her in her post at this point.
It's a shame. At one time, I'd have let her as far into the inner circle as you, Mentallo...
That inner circle paycheck does buy the kind of luxuries you can't get in eco-hippy paradise.
Too bad for Frenzy. She was one of the best, but she caught the worst disease you can get in this game...
...caring what happens to the suckers.
PAIBOK!
NO!
AARRGHH--
That's the thing, Flumm. I do care--about everybody in the Sol System.
Somebody's got to.
Somebody's got to care enough to be the bad guy.

THE WORLD FARM.
"Somebody's got to stay with the ship."
Yeah, because there's so much fighting to do out *here*.
Hello? Anyone *alive*? Do I need to fly back and tell the Five to cook up some more *eggs*?
If anyone can hear my voice, *please respond*--
BREEEEEP
//THREAT DETECTED//
//END THREAT//
...
I didn't mean *you*.
"I'm not at home to *nuisance callers* today..."

...so I hope you'll excuse my rudeness in showing you out via the quickest way available.
Your violent deaths.
CHKOOM
Thunderbird! Zsen!
I need him off-balance!
Tendons?
Tendons.
SHIK
SHIKK
Aaahh!
You feel that body's pain, huh?
CHOOMM
Unnhh--
Useful intel.


Very useful. It seems the Overlord-class was built to give orders, not to engage in combat-- I'll remember that.
Fortunately, I can call on further assistance in this very room.
Rise, my heralds. Your creator commands.
SSSSSS
AH...
...THE CREATOR HAS GUESTS.
Aw, crap.
We're in trouble--I can see the power inside these three--
SUCH A COMPLIMENT. BUT YOU HAVE GREATNESS IN YOU, LITTLE SPEAKER-- A GREAT TOOL FOR OUR PURPOSE.
MAY I TAKE A CLOSER LOOK?

...
Fesi's thing was talking to *universes*, right?
That's right, John.
Better get your *knife* ready.

It doesn't matter *how* tough you are, Frenzy...
...you still need to breathe.
And fire just *eats* that oxygen right up, doesn't it?
Let her go--
Down, cowboy.
WHAM
You'd *think* you'd have gotten the message the *first* time.
There's something in you that loves to hurl itself at a ***hopeless cause,*** isn't there?
Gabriel-- it's not too late.
I promise you, this is ***not what you want...***
Oh, ***Cal'syee.*** What happened? The Deathbird *I* knew would *never* do this-- *bend to a throne.*
The fire in your eyes is lost, my love...

...but my fire burns forever.
Ugh.
Permission not to watch, boss?
Permission denied, Flumm.
What we do, we have to look at.
That's the price we pay for...
...Oh.
Oh no.
Oh, Gabriel.
I did try to warn you.
Wonderful things, Shi'ar image inducers. They even do the voices.
Xandra couldn't make it, Vulcan.

Fortunately, I rule.

A COSTA ++ I'M ROBERTO DA COSTA ++ I'M ROB
YOU'RE NOT ++ AND YOU'RE NOT ++ AND YOU'R
S ++ SO STOP READING MY SECRET FILES ++ S

BRAND IS PLANNING SOMETHING.
SHE DIDN'T INVITE ME, SO IT'S PROBABLY NOT FUN.
I SHOULD PLAN MY OWN SOMETHING.

PHASE ONE: CHECK MY REFLECTION.

Style remains vital in these matters.
Am I still incredibly handsome and impeccably dressed?
I am. Fantastic, let's proceed.

(The moustache question remains. So much at stake -- if I failed to achieve the Total Selleck, my only option would be to hide my shame from the world and become the All-New Doctor Doom.
I can't risk it.
Or can I?)

PHASE TWO: WORK OUT BRAND'S NEXT MOVE.

She wants to expand Sol's influence -- and her own power. She's made Sol stronger, but she's run out of gifts to give -- so now what?

Now she makes someone else weak.

PHASE THREE: WHAT WOULD I DO? (EVIL VERSION)

Start a nice little Star War.
Set two of Sol's biggest allies against each other and play mediator.

Who fights who?
The Shi'ar Empire is very fragile right now -- Xandra's ready to transition to a Commonwealth. Not good for Sol -- we'd be one small system competing among hundreds.

So I start the war by taking her out.

PHASE FOUR: WHAT DO I DO? (NON-EVIL)

I have a vital hot tub at 3 p.m.
Just pull something out of the files.

Fake my death and jump out of my own coffin? Not feeling it today.

The Red Lagoon was a giant robot all along? Construction isn't finished.

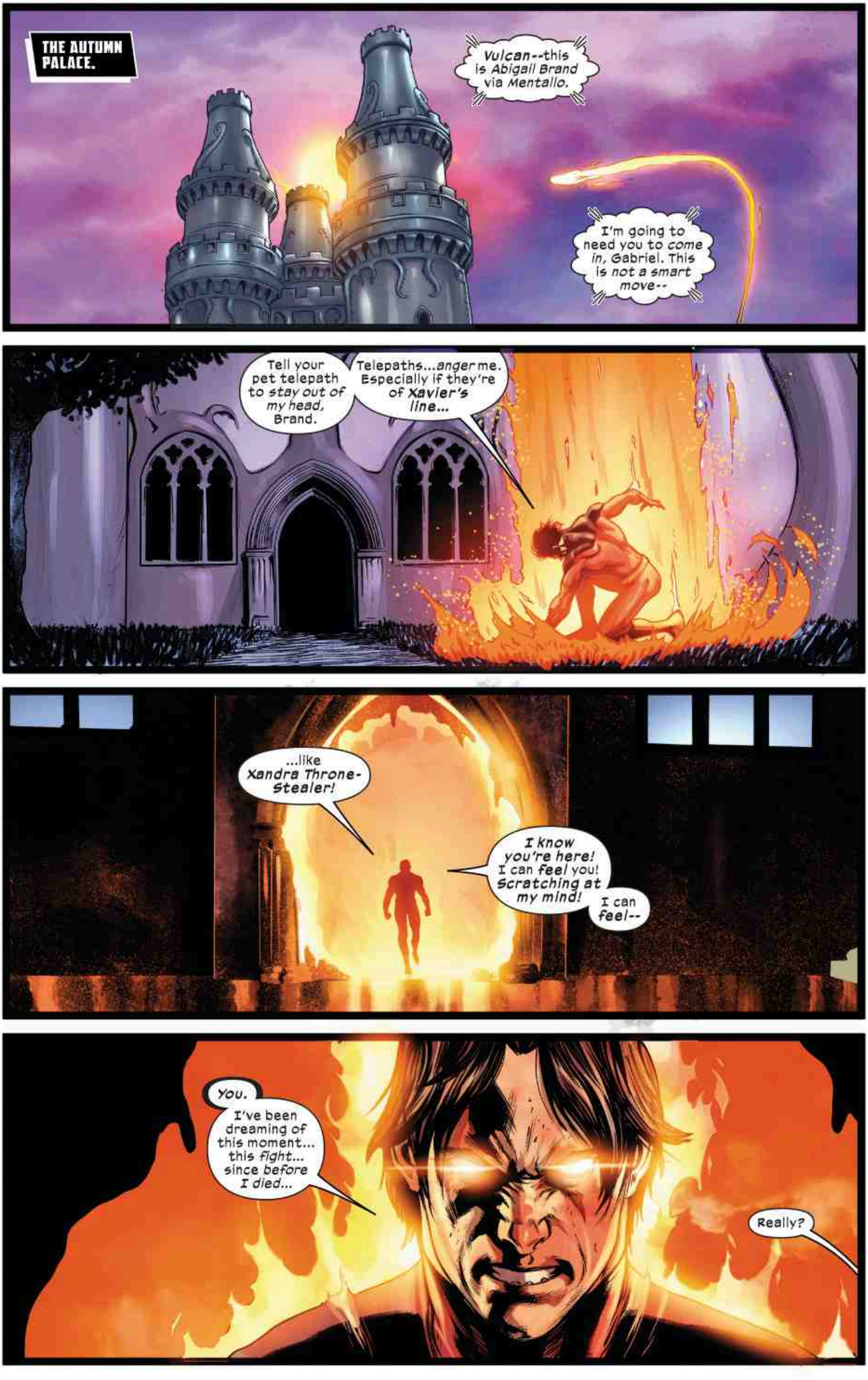
The ~~President~~ Empress is me in an image inducer? Boom.

PHASE FIVE: HOT TUB.

No secrets in a hot tub.

ROBERTO ACCOMPLISHED.

I will burn you alive for this--
Will you? We both eat solar energy, remember.
And I don't need to take it from the sun when I can take it from you--isn't that how it goes?
But please-- give it a go.
Find out which of us is hotter.
...
You are a distraction, Da Costa. From Xandra Xavier's charred bones crunching between my teeth.
And if she's not here...
...I know exactly where to find her.
He'd have incinerated you where you sat, you know.
Obviously. But even so-- I'm better looking.
It's the moral victory that's important.


THE AUTUMN PALACE.
Vulcan--this is Abigail Brand via Mentallo.
I'm going to need you to come in, Gabriel. This is not a smart move--
Tell your pet telepath to stay out of my head, Brand.
Telepaths...anger me. Especially if they're of Xavier's line...
...like Xandra Throne-Stealer!
I know you're here! I can feel you! Scratching at my mind!
I can feel--
You.
I've been dreaming of this moment... this fight... since before I died...
Really?

Sorry I kept you waiting.
TO BE CONTINUED!

NEXT

"Welcome to the New Age"

10

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